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Disappointment and disaster attended this experiment and spasm of reform. Spelling, and all the school work of which it is the basis, deteriorated alarmingly. To-day the spelling-book in some form is back in the schools; nor will it be banished again while the present race of teachers lasts. Careful experimentation, close observation and enlightened experience have established the spelling-book as an educational necessity.

The same article calls the spelling of word lists a "stupid practice." The plan is less popular and prevalent than formerly. But I am easily skeptical after all, whether dictation and sentence work are accomplishing far better results than the old fashioned oral and written spelling of lists of words. To say the least it is modest and wise in us to be conservative in our assertions that any particular method is *the* method in spelling, or, indeed, in any branch of educational work. Nowadays the pupil catches the drift of the meanings of words from the way in which they are used in the sentence or context, and is prone to be satisfied with that. In the olden times new and abstract words created curiosity as to their meaning and use, which was satisfied only by the teacher or dictionary. Take the word *phthisis* quoted by our critic as an illustration, the peculiar orthography was sufficient to make a pupil anxious to know what it meant, whether an animal, a disease, or something to eat or wear. In the sentence, he died of phthisis, after a long and painful illness, the child knows at once that it is a malady likely to prove fatal, and gives the word no further thought. If, however, our pupil failed to learn at the times just what the word meant, his attention was arrested the instant he heard or saw it used; he recognized an old offender; perhaps he got a "head mark" or was "spelled down" by that word. "Parallel" went round our class when I was a small boy. The spelling and the meaning of that word were forever fixed in my mind. So *austere*, *cimeter*, *cemetery*, *cham-mile*, and scores of words that decimated our ranks or "spelled the whole school down," come to me as I pen these lines.

"There is no surer way of making a simpleton of a boy than by drilling him for a 'spelling match,'" says our friend. Not an inconsiderable amount of spelling was learned in that way. It also taught the boy to think while on his feet; to be calm and collected in his ideas in a crisis; to be quick to decide and act, for he took the word almost before "next" was called; rivalry stirred the ambition of more than one sluggish soul; victory awakened the sense of achievement in many a mind unconscious of its powers. To place every letter in "*metempsychosis*" quickly and accurately was a drill in attention to details that has given many a man a grasp upon complicated and perplexing affairs. The memory may be "the poorest of faculties," but too few ever reach that plane of intellectuality where they can rely upon a prompt and unerring memory.

Webster's spelling-book is called the "stupidest and most meaningless book in existence." It is full of dictation and reading exercises; is that the reason? I have heard many people acknowledge gratefully their obligations to the old "elementary spelling-book," not alone for its aid in spelling, but for its proverbs and sentiments which influenced their lives. No single-handed critic can ever pile such epithets deep enough upon the "old blue-back" to detract one iota from the reverent regard with which it is held.

F. B. GAULT.

IX.

POSTAL SAVINGS BANKS AND TELEGRAPHS.

THERE is no sentiment so widely spread and so deeply rooted among the workmen of America, whether organized or unorganized, as the sentiment against monopolies. It is so intense that it may be regarded as an ineradicable prejudice

or instinct. No recognized representative of any great corporate interest has **any** chance of election to any official position of high trust and honor, if he must depend on the popular vote to reach it. Why this widespread spirit of antagonism to corporations? Because, as a rule, corporations have not regarded the privileges accorded to them by legislation as public trusts, nor themselves as public servants, but have exercised the power of **taxation** without representation conferred upon them by **charter** in the most selfish and despotic spirit regardless of the public interest. What is the remedy? Clearly that no special privileges shall hereafter be granted to individuals; that all laws shall be general laws; that "private bills" shall be utterly abolished, and that wherever any business by its very nature demands a monopoly—as railroads, and telegraphs—then that that business shall either be exclusively performed or effectively curtailed by the State. There is no socialism in this demand—now made by nearly all the labor organizations in this country, and it is noteworthy that the cry of "centralization" raised against it comes exclusively from the servants or beneficiaries of corporations, or from the Rip Van Winkles of the Chair, whose political philosophy is founded on those facts of the last century and of a practically extinct civilization.

Every civilized nation in the world except the United States owns its telegraph system, and everywhere the telegraph system is conducted better and at less cost to the public than in the United States. Here we are absolutely helpless against the impositions of a small group of monopolists, for there is no effective competition possible in telegraphing. It should be an adjunct to the post office, which, as experience has shown, is done more cheaply, and with greater perfection of business methods, than *any* private business in the country. Why should millions be annually needlessly drawn from the people to enrich individuals when the telegraph could be managed at cost and more efficiently by the Government? If this suggestion is "socialistic," then the governments of all Europe are socialistic to this extent.

Government or postal saving banks have also been established by England, Belgium, France, Italy, Holland, and in India, Canada and the Argentine Republic, and they have been productive of infinite good to the working classes in promoting savings. A similar system has been advocated by the Senior Senator of New York, and a bill introduced into Congress to establish it. Let it pass.

HENRY MELROSE.

X.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

It seems hitherto to have escaped the attention of philosophers who like to speculate upon social phenomena and the thousand and one manifestations of social evolution, their effects and causes, drawing all manner of strange and curious deductions from what they see or imagine—it seems to have escaped these gentry that in the very popular and widespread use of aerated waters we have an illustration of popular feeling, and an instructive sign of the times. People like these bubbling waters because their effervescence lends a certain life and freshness to what might otherwise be insipid and ordinary; and this liking is only a manifestation of the same spirit, which finds life itself flat, stale, and unprofitable, if it be not agitated and eventful, even though the agitation and eventfulness are wholly due to artificial causes.

The tastes and habits of people speak more truly of their characters than whole libraries of volumes of speculative philosophy, and when we find a new trade brought into existence by a popular demand, and not due to any new discovery in the sciences and arts, we may at once be sure that the characteristics of